

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Inspector General

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Inspector General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 29, 2003

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Caregiver for Mentally Retarded Arrested for Sexual Abuse

District of Columbia Inspector General Charles C. Maddox announced today that an investigation conducted by his office has led to the arrest of Lionel Herring, age 28, for sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult. Herring was employed as a caregiver at a group home for mentally retarded individuals. The Metropolitan Police Department Sex Assault Unit, the Department of Human Services Incident Management & Investigations Unit, and the OIG Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) jointly investigated the reported sexual abuse. The investigation culminated in the arrest of Herring on the charge of First Degree Sexual Abuse of a Ward in violation of D.C. Criminal Code § 22-4113, an offense with a maximum penalty of imprisonment of not more than 10 years and a fine of no more than \$100, 000. Herring's initial appearance was August 29.

The OIG Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the United States Attorney's Office will prosecute the case jointly.

The MFCU, which was created in March 2000, handled this case as part of an effort called the Guardian Angel Project (GAP). GAP is a comprehensive program designed to deter and when appropriate, punish health care providers who intentionally abuse or neglect vulnerable persons under their care. Among the institutions covered by GAP are nursing homes, group homes for adults who are mentally retarded and facilities for mentally ill persons. These institutions are a main focus of the MFCU's outreach and education efforts. MFCU investigators and attorneys make presentations to industry and professional groups covering topics such as detecting abuse, prompt and accurate reporting of abuse and the most effect ways to work with law enforcement agencies. Also, emphasis is placed on outreach and education efforts aimed at senior citizen groups, consumer groups and advocates for elderly and other vulnerable citizens.